(c) the number of people employed in this industry, State-wise;

(d) whether Government is considering to provide any assistance to the people employed in this industry; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIM ENTERPRISES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) The Government has continued to encourage khadi and village industries in the country and some of the important steps taken by Government during the last three years to encourage khadi and village industries include.

(i) Amendments to the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Act, 1956, to revamp the KVIC.

(ii) Constitution of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) during July, 2006 for the development of Khadi and Village Industries in the country.

(iii) Constitution of National Khadi and Village Industries Board (NKVIB) during March 2007 to advise KVIC in its functioning.

(iv) Continued implementation of Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) which was introduced during 1995-96, to assit the setting up of village industry units in the rural areas, including small towns with population upto 20,000.

(v) Introduction of the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) for development of around 100 clusters of the traditional industries for enhanced competitiveness and employment of artisans and rural enterpreneurs.

(vi) Continued implementation of the Product Development Design Intervention and Packaging (PRODIP) Scheme introduced in 2003-04 for improved design and packaging of khadi and village industry products.

(vii) Continued implementation of the Group Insurance Scheme, (Khadi Karigar Janashree Bima Yojana), which was introduced with effect from 15 August 2003 for the benefit of khadi workers/artisans.

(viii) Implementation of the Ready to Use Mission for Khadi Products to convert khadi fabric into ready-made garments for higher value addition.

(ix) Ensuring the availability of quality raw materials for khadi production through six Central Silver Plants of KVIC, etc.

(b) Government allocates funds to the KVIC for implementation of schemes for the promotion and development of khadi and village industries. The KVIC, in turn, allocates the funds, inter-alia, to the Khadi and Village Industries Boards of the States/Union Territories, registered khadi institutions, etc.

(c) The State/Union Territory-wise estimates of the number of persons employed in the khadi and village industry sector at the end of March, 2007 are given in the Statement *(See* below).

(d) and (e) For implementation of schemes for the promotion and development of the khadi and village industry sector, the Government has made a Plan provision of Rs. 1149 crore during 2008-09.